


WELLS - NEXT - THE - SEA
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.
for the year 1958
to which is appended the
REPORT
of the
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR.



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WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Public Health Department

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

W.H. CRICHTON, C.I.E., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector

F. RODWELL, M.R.San. I., M.S.I.A.

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Public Health Committee

1958

Chairman - Mr. J. Cadany

Members - Mr. J.H. Acock
 Mrs. D.A. Barnett
 Mrs. V.R. Chamberlin
 Mr. L. Cox
 Mr. A.W. Drury
 Mr. T.C. Grange
 Dr. E.W. Hicks
 Mr. B.H. Styman
 Mr. C.L. Terrington
 Mr. W.F. Thurgur
 Mr. P.W. Webb

- PREFACE -

The Chairman & Members,
Wells-next-the-Sea Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Annual Public Health Report 1958.

It gives me particular pleasure to present to you this year the Annual Public Health Report for the District because of the very important step which has been taken towards the solution of its most pressing public health problem, namely housing, by the beginning of the clearance of the Freeman Street - Theatre Yard Area.

In itself this will remove many unsatisfactory habitations but it will also have far reaching consequences in reducing the long list of housing applicants and in improving the amenities of the town which will ultimately be reflected in the health and happiness of the people.

The Vital Statistics in fact indicate that the state of the public health is satisfactory and the incidence of communicable diseases remains remarkably low. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that these statistics do not measure human happiness nor the many ailments, mental and physical, which are not notifiable by Statute.

I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude and appreciation for the interest and support given to me by the Members and Staff of the Council in my task and also for the invaluable assistance given to me by the Staff of the Local Health Office in the compilation of this Report.

Yours sincerely,

W.H. CRICHTON,

Medical Officer of Health.

PART I

- General -

1. Staff -

There were no changes in the Staff of the Public Health Department during the year. Mr. F. Rodwell, Public Health Inspector and Surveyor deserves special commendation for his devoted work in his solitary assignment which includes duties as Surveyor, Draughtsman, Public Health Inspector, Housing Manager, Waterworks & Sewage Engineer, Food and Slaughter House Inspector and Caravan Camp Inspector. All these duties Mr. Rodwell carries out without an assistant and without clerical assistance. The Council would be well advised to consider the problem which will arise of Mr. Rodwell's replacement on his retirement.

2. General Character -

There is every indication that Wells, with its fine beaches and coastline and its attractive setting, is becoming increasingly popular as a seaside resort and more sought-after as a place of residence and retirement. There are still a large number of American families living in the District.

3. Population -

The Registrar General's estimate of the mid-year population for 1958 is 2,700, which is 100 more than that of the preceding year. On a basis of natural increase, the difference between births and deaths notified during the year, is only 15.

4. Area - 2,670 acres - no change.

5. Rateable Value - £21,984 (£8.2.10d. per head of population).

6. Sum represented by a penny rate - £85. 5. 4d.

7. Meteorological Conditions - The meteorological data shown in Appendix A (p. 11) are records of observations taken at Raynham and supplied to me by courtesy of the Royal Air Force. They serve only as an indication of the weather conditions prevailing in the Area as a whole. In Wells however records are maintained of the rainfall in the District and these were as follows:-

January	2.42"	April	1.06"	July	4.86"	October	2.02"
February	3.85"	May	2.61"	August	2.45"	November	0.97"
March	0.97"	June	1.97"	September	2.25"	December	2.53"
				Total	27.96 inches.		

The total rainfall in the preceding year was 22.53 inches.

- Vital Statistics -1. Births -

a) The number of live births registered during the year rose to 46 as compared with 31 in the preceding year. Thus:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Legitimate	18 (13)	25 (17)	43 (30)
Illegitimate	2 (1)	1 (-)	3 (1)
	-----	-----	-----
	20 (14)	26 (17)	46 (31)
	-----	-----	-----

b) The Live birth rate per 1,000 population is 17.7; the rate in the preceding year was 11.9 and the average rate during the preceding five years was 16.6 per 1,000.

c) The adjusted birth rate - after application of the comparability factor (1.10) is 18.7 per 1,000 population as compared with 13.09 in the preceding year and 16.4 in England and Wales.

d) Still Births - There was only one still birth reported - a male, legitimate. Thus the still birth rate per 1,000 live and still births is 17.4 compared with 21.6 in England and Wales.

Infant Deaths -

e) Only one recorded - a female, legitimate, neonatal death due to prematurity.

f) Infant Mortality Rates -

(i) Total rate - 21.7 per 1,000 live births which compares favourably with 32.2 in 1957. This rate is subject to wide fluctuation, Thus:-

<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>
21.27	Nil	75.0	Nil	32.2

The average for the last quinquennium is therefore 25.65.

(ii) Legitimate infant mortality rate - 23.2 per 1,000.

(iii) Illegitimate infant mortality rate - Nil.

(iv) Neonatal mortality rate - 21.7 per 1,000 live births.

g) Illegitimacy percentage - This has risen to 6.5% from 3.4% in the preceding year.

h) Maternal deaths (per 1,000 living & still births) - Nil.

2. Deaths -

The causes of death as recorded by the Registrar General were as follows:-

	Males	Females	Totals
Cancer, Stomach	- (2)	1 (1)	1 (3)
" " bronchus	- (1)	- (-)	- (1)
" " breast	- (-)	- (2)	- (2)
" " other forms	4 (2)	- (3)	4 (5)
Vascular lesions, nervous system	- (1)	6 (-)	6 (1)
Coronary disease	5 (1)	2 (1)	7 (2)
Other heart diseases	1 (3)	2 (2)	3 (5)
Other diseases of circulation	1 (1)	- (1)	1 (2)
Influenza	- (1)	- (-)	- (1)
Pneumonia	1 (-)	1 (-)	2 (-)
Bronchitis	1 (-)	1 (-)	2 (-)
Duodenal ulcer	1 (-)	- (-)	1 (-)
Other diseases	1 (3)	2 (3)	3 (6)
Suicide	1 (-)	- (-)	1 (-)
Totals	16 (15)	15 (13)	31= (28)

The figures in brackets relate to the preceding year.

Compared with the figures for the preceding year the outstanding features are the relative decrease in the proportion of cancer deaths to the total deaths - 16% as against 34.3%, and the very striking increase in the relative proportion of deaths from coronary disease - 22.5% as against 6.2%.

A note should be made of the fact that the figures compiled from monthly records show nine cases of cancer of different forms (including one myelomatosis) as against the Registrar General's total figure of five.

The Crude Death Rate is 11.4 per 1,000 as against 12.3. in the preceding year.

The Corrected Death Rate after application of the comparability factor (0.84) is 9.5. The rate for England and Wales is 11.7.

- Communicable Diseases -

1. Apart from an epidemic of mumps which began in January and persisted throughout the ensuing months (February 7; March 33; April 8; May 27; September 1; October/November 2 cases) there has been very little communicable disease in Wells. Mumps is not statutorily notifiable. My information therefore is by courtesy of the School Authorities and will therefore not cover periods of vacation.

2. The only notifiable diseases reported were:-

- 1 case of infective hepatitis in a young woman of 20;
- 1 case of pulmonary tuberculosis in a man of 53,
diagnosed through the Mass X-ray Unit;
- 1 case of pulmonary tuberculosis transferred to the
District from London.

3. Coughs and colds, Particularly among school children, were rife, very persistent and damaging to the children's general health. Preventive measures have abolished or mitigated many of the "killer" diseases of the past. I can only hope that means will in time be found to prevent the common cold just as effectively.

4. The Poliomyelitis Vaccination campaign made good progress despite the initial doubts about the safety of the vaccine & the insistence on British vaccine which was not available except in very small quantities, if at all, throughout the year. The Ministerial announcement defining the relative merits of the types of vaccine available did nothing to help those who entertained any doubts, to make up their minds. 1,346 vaccinations were carried out. These comprised mainly school children, pre-school children and expectant mothers. There was very little response to the offer made to adolescents, extending vaccination facilities to this important age group. By the end of the year 8567 persons in the Area had been vaccinated and of these 7,257 had had two injections and 1,310, three injections.

5. Tuberculosis -

a) By the end of 1958 the Tuberculosis Register of the District was as follows:-

Pulmonary Cases		Non-Pulmonary Cases	
Males	Females	Males	Females
8	2	-	2
10	Totals	2	

b) The Mass X-ray Unit - This Unit visited the District in May. The sessions held were advertised in Wells District itself as well as in adjoining Parishes in Docketing and Walsingham Rural Districts. The total number of persons who availed themselves of this service was 893 among whom 3 active cases of tuberculosis were discovered and 1 case which required observation.

c) B.C.G. -

The programme of B.C.G. vaccination for school leavers was continued. 114 children in their fourteenth year were tuberculin tested. Of these 32 or 28% were positive. Subsequent X-ray examination revealed no abnormality. The remainder (81) were vaccinated with B.C.G. vaccine.

6. Diphtheria and Whooping Cough - With the total disappearance of the former and very appreciable mitigation of symptoms in the few cases of the latter, these two once dreaded diseases have lost much of their terror. There can be no doubt that this happy result is due to the preventive vaccination offered to all children at Infant Welfare Centres and in Medical Practitioner's Surgeries. Full advantage is being taken of the "combined" diphtheria and whooping cough vaccine as well as of the "triple" vaccine introduced during the year which also affords protection against Tetanus. The figures of vaccination in the Area during the year were as follows:-

Vaccine used	Under 1 yr.	1 - 4	5 - 14	Total
Dip/Pertussis/Tetanus "Triple"	146	70	-	216
Dip/Pertussis "Combined"	78	30	-	108
Dip/Tetanus	3	-	-	3
Diphtheria	12	5	1	18
Total	239	105	1	345

Booster doses against diphtheria are normally given at school on admission but this programme has had to give way temporarily to the more urgent one of poliomyelitis.

Smallpox - Vaccinations against smallpox are being sought in increasing numbers as can be seen by the following table of vaccinations carried out in the Area:-

Age groups	Under 1	1	2 to 4	5 to 14	15 +	Total
Primary	396 (367)	14 (19)	12 (28)	15 (18)	24 (32)	471
Re-vaccinations	-	-	5 (2)	24 (14)	84 (83)	113
Totals	396 (367)	14 (19)	17 (30)	39 (32)	118 (115)	584

Now that the duration of the journey from endemic sources in the East has been so very considerably shortened by air travel, the risks of infection have become correspondingly greater. The work of the District Nurses in overcoming the prejudices of mothers in this respect has been admirable.

- Environmental Hygiene -

Housing - It is with extreme satisfaction that I am in a position to record the substantial progress made in housing by the acceptance by the Council of my official representation, under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1957, declaring the Area between Freeman Street and Theatre Road a Clearance Area. This Area, long overdue for attention comprises 45 properties in Freeman Street, Bouche's Court, Lugger's Yard, Theatre Yard and Stearnan's Yard in varying stages of dilapidation, making them unfit for human habitation though some have been rendered fit but must be included because of their bad arrangement relative to other properties in the area. This area is to form Stage I of a larger area which is planned for clearance and redevelopment. It will involve the rehousing of 30 families. The representation was made in September 1958 and by the end of the year plans were in hand for the first lot of 11 bungalows (2 bedroomed or 3 bedroomed) to be built to provide the necessary alternative accommodation. Although I personally carried out a detailed inspection of all the houses in the Area, the laborious work of measurement, recording and drawing up of the necessary plans was all carried out by Mr. Rodwell, the Surveyor, to whom much credit is due as much for his expert assistance as for his long experience and local knowledge. I wish to take this opportunity of recording my gratitude to Mr. Rodwell for all his invaluable help.

This Clearance Area with all that it involves, and the Clearance Areas to follow, will go a long way to solve the housing problem in Wells by the provision of new houses and the re-allocations which will become possible to ensure a more equitable distribution of the accommodation available. As will be seen in Mr. Rodwell's report (attached) 58 applicants remained on the housing list by the end of the year.

In addition to the Clearance Area two individual houses were dealt with under the Housing Acts as unfit for human habitation and undertakings have been accepted by the Council that they will be rendered fit.

Unfortunately the Council suspended improvement grants temporarily during the year and it was therefore impossible for this valuable instrument to be used for the betterment of existing properties.

Camping Sites - Particulars of this well maintained and popular local amenity are shown in Mr. Rodwell's report.

Water Supply - This has been both of excellent quality throughout the year as the report shown in Appendix B testify. This report is on a sample taken in July 1958. With regard to the adequacy of the supply there was no shortage but the margin between supply and demand in summer is precarious. For this reason alone the proposed merger with the Walsingham R.D.C. supplies will be a very welcome one.

Slaughter Houses - The minimum requirements prescribed under the Slaughter House Act 1958 (Circular FSH 16/57) were circulated to the two licence holders in the District for their information and guidance and to ensure their compliance with these requirements before applying for renewal of licences.

The number and character of animals slaughtered and inspected is shown in the Table on page 17 of the Public Health Inspector's Report. It will be noted that on an average some 52% of all meat slaughtered is inspected. It is hoped to improve on this percentage but it is difficult, if not impossible, to ensure the desired maximum of 100% inspections with the present staff. Meanwhile it is comforting that so small a proportion of the carcasses examined were found to be diseased.

Ice Cream Samples - A small group of samples taken in September did not prove very satisfactory (Grade I - 1; Grade II - 1; Grade III - 2). Further supervision is required and will no doubt provide better results.

Mussels - An enquiry was received from Doncaster Public Health Authority on the source of mussels sent from Wells. It had to be acknowledged that the source was not free from risk, that sterilisation locally was not practicable but that sterilisation (by boiling) at destination would eliminate any possible danger.

W.H. CRICHTON,

Medical Officer of Health.

APPENDIX A.- CLIMATIC DATA -

	Mean Daily Maximum Temp.	Mean Daily Minimum Temp.	Mean Daily Temp.	Total Rainfall (inches)	Mean Relative Humidity.
January	40.4 (44.9)	32.7 (37.6)	36.5 (41.3)	2.90 (1.87)	90.5 (88.8)
February	44.4 (45.3)	35.6 (35.3)	39.8 (40.3)	4.00 (3.12)	87.5 (89.3)
March	43.3 (53.6)	32.3 (41.0)	37.8 (47.3)	1.22 (2.41)	84.5 (84.0)
April	50.4 (49.0)	38.0 (39.9)	44.2 (46.5)	1.04 (0.54)	78.5 (80.0)
May	60.0 (56.5)	44.4 (42.1)	52.2 (49.3)	2.93 (1.29)	77.25 (76.5)
June	63.2 (67.5)	48.7 (48.8)	59.5 (58.1)	2.26 (1.74)	84.3 (73.3)
July	67.6 (67.9)	52.8 (54.4)	60.2 (61.1)	4.00 (3.33)	83.0 (84.3)
August	68.0 (65.6)	53.3 (52.4)	60.7 (59.0)	2.15 (2.39)	84.8 (83.0)
September	65.1 (59.8)	52.6 (48.3)	58.9 (54.1)	2.57 (4.38)	85.5 (83.8)
October	56.5 (56.9)	45.9 (46.5)	51.9 (51.7)	2.27 (1.47)	88.8 (87.0)
November	47.7 (46.6)	40.0 (40.0)	43.9 (43.3)	1.62 (1.71)	93.0 (87.3)
December	43.7 (42.8)	35.6 (35.4)	38.7 (39.1)	2.98 (2.60)	94.8 (89.8)

Figures in brackets denote preceding year's figures.

- APPENDIX B -

Source and Date of Sample.	Raw Water from Waterworks Well 3.7.58.
Appearance	Clear
Nature of Deposit	Nil
Colour	Nil
Reaction	Neutral. pH 7.10
Odour	Nil
Taste	Satisfactory
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	0.01
Albuminoid Nitrogen	0.01
Nitrate Nitrogen	9.5
Nitrite Nitrogen	practically nil
Chlorine as Chlorides	72
Total Hardness	295
Temporary Hardness	220
Permanent Hardness	75

Opinion -

"This water is of excellent organic and bacteriological quality. The analysis differs very little from that of previous samples. The total hardness approximates to 21 Clark, about three-quarters of which is temporary. This water would not be expected to have any serious corrosive action on metals, though some slight solvent action on new pipe-work may be experienced. Iron and other metals are completely absent from the raw water, and its appearance, odour and taste are very satisfactory. In our opinion this water is well adapted to the purpose of a public supply."

(Sgd) Lincoln, Sutton and Wood.

- PART II -

THE REPORT OF

MR. F. RODWELL, SENIOR PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT

COUNCIL.

1. Inspections -

The number of inspections carried out in connection with Public Health work during the year was as follows:-

<u>Nature of Inspections</u>	<u>Number of Visits.</u>
Housing Survey	114
Housing Repairs & Byelaws	145
Slaughterhouses	186
Shops	21
Posts Act	27
Nuisances & Miscellaneous	192
	<hr/>
<u>Total</u>	<u>685</u>

During the year 38 complaints were received regarding nuisances and posts.

(2) Housing -

During the year part of the area between Theatre Road and Freeman Street was declared The Freeman Street Clearance Area No.14. This portion which has an area of nearly 2 acres comprises 113 separate properties or sites of former properties and the preparation of the necessary plans and details constituted a major operation as no additional staff was engaged to assist in the works.

During the year 1 unfit house was demolished.

New Buildings -

During the year the following houses were constructed -

By the Council	-
Private Enterprise	1
	<hr/>
<u>Total</u>	<u>1</u>

Plans were approved by the Council for the following:-

Conversion of 2 shops into flats at Northfield Lane and the construction of 11 bungalows at Northfield Way as first instalment in the rehousing of occupants of houses in the Clearance Area No.14. Preliminary plans have been prepared to complete the rehousing of occupants of the Clearance Area at the Church Marsh Site, where it is proposed to construct 20 bungalows.

Housing Applications -

At the 31st December, 1958 there were 58 applicants on the Council's Housing List and during the year 8 families were rehoused.

Improvement Grants -

Action was suspended by the Council during 1958.

Defects at houses were remedied as the result of informal action. Action taken under Statutory Powers resulted as follows:-

Houses closed	1
Houses demolished	1

(3) Camping Sites -

There are two approved caravan and camping sites in the Urban Area:-

- (i) The Beach Road Site controlled by the Council.
- (ii) The Orchard Farm, Burnt Street Site - under private control.

Owing to the increased popularity of the Beach Road Site a further sanitary block was constructed by the Council in the Autumn to be ready for the 1959 season, and a further area of rough land levelled to increase the area of the caravan site.

(4) Water Supply - During the year 24,269,000 Gallons of water were pumped and supplied to the town. Owing to the very wet summer this was the lowest quantity consumed for a period of four years. The maximum weekly consumption being during the week ending 10th August when 740,000 gallons were pumped. During the year no shortage of underground water was noted.

During the year negotiations were commenced with the Walsingham R.D.C. with a view to setting up a Joint Committee to administer both undertakings and to arrange for the supply of water for the Urban area being obtained through the Walsingham R.D.C. Waterworks.

No extensions were carried out to mains during the year.

New connections during the year	1
Number of Domestic properties drawing water supplies from the mains	959
Dwelling houses not obtaining water from the mains	6

(5) Sewerage and Sewage Disposal -

Extensions during the year	Nil
Connections to sewers	5
Dwelling houses on cesspool drainage	2
Number of houses which have earth closets	141

(6) Milk Supplies -

There are two licenced Dairymen for the distribution of milk within the area and two shops were licenced for the sale of milk, one being on the Beach Caravan Site.

Food Preparing Premises -

The following premises are registered under the provisions of the Food & Drugs Act.

For the sale of Ice Cream	15
Dish & Chip Shops	3
Sausages & Potted Meats	5
Boiling of Shellfish	4
	<hr/>
Total	27
	<hr/>

(8) Rodent Control -

Rodent poisoning is carried out by the sewerage works attendant who has received training in this work.

During the year poisoning to destroy rats and mice were carried out as follows:-

Housing Estates	4
Private Houses and Blocks	9
Refuse Dump	1

Poisoning at the various granaries and malthouse is carried out by private contractors.

(9) Refuse Collection -

During the year the Council disposed of the Karrier Bantan Collecting Vehicle and purchased a Ford Thames Vehicle with a refuse collection body.

A weekly collection of refuse is carried out to all properties by the vehicle and three scavengers, and a thrice weekly collection is carried out at the caravan and camping site in the season.

Nightsoil is collected twice weekly between 4.30a.m. and 7.00a.m. by means of a 300 gallon tank placed in the refuse collection vehicle.

The refuse dump is sited near to the Lineworks and well clear of the built up area.

The cost of the scavenging services during the year ended 31st March, 1959 was £1.660.

(10) Factories Acts 1937 & 1948 -

Number of Premises registered	21
Outworkers in connection with Factories	Nil

(11) Food and Meat -

The following foodstuffs were condemned at various shops:-

Pork Sausages	12 lbs
2 tins Chopped Pork	8 "
1 tin Ox Tongue	6 "
5 tins Apricots	10 "
1 tin Peas	1 "
1 " Lamb Tongue	10 "
1 " Corned Beef	6 "

Total 11 tins	53 lbs.
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There are two licenced slaughterhouses in the area. There are no knackers Yards or premises licenced for the slaughter of horses within the Urban District.

The following Table shows details of animals slaughtered and carcasses inspected during visits to slaughterhouses.

	Cattle	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs
Number Slaughtered	287	22	529	547
" Inspected	136	9	290	292
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticercosis</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	1 (a)	1 (b)	1 (c)	-
Part or organ condemned	2 (d)	-	1 (e)	4 (f)
Percentage affected	1%	4.5%	.38%	.74%
<u>T.B. only</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-
Part or organ condemned	-	-	-	1 (g)
Percentage affected	-	-	-	.25%
<u>Cysticercosis</u>				
Part or organ condemned	-	-	-	-
Carcase treated by refrigeration	-	-	-	-
Generalised & totally condemned	-	-	-	-

It was necessary to condemn the following meat as unfit for human consumption:-

<u>Cattle</u>	(a)	1 carcass Peritonitis	360 lbs	
	(d)	2 Livers Cirrhosis	<u>28 "</u>	388 lbs.
<u>Calves</u>	(b)	1 carcass Fevered	<u>75 "</u>	75 lbs.
<u>Sheep</u>	(c)	1 carcass Peritonitis	73 "	
	(e)	1 Set lungs congestion	<u>1 "</u>	74 lbs.
<u>Pigs</u>	(f)	$\frac{1}{2}$ pig Peritonitis	36 "	
		3 Livers congested	3 "	
	(g)	1 Pig Head T.B.	<u>42 "</u>	<u>81 lbs.</u>
<u>Total weight of meat condemned</u>				<u>618 lbs.</u>

Port Health -

During the year 9 vessels entered the port, 8 with cargo and 1 light. 9 vessels left the port 2 with cargo and 7 light.

The following are the places or ports with which Wells has trade

<u>Inward</u>	Brenen	Kanit.
<u>Outward</u>	Wick	Barley
	Belgium	"

No sickness was reported by the masters of any vessels entering the port.

During November the port was made the base for 4 boats engaged in the sprat fishing. The fish landed were immediately consigned to the packing station at Whitstable or to cold stores.

As the fishery was successful there is every prospect that more boats will be working from the port in the coming season.

F. Rodwell.

Public Health Inspector.

